



CHRIST, THE SOURCE AND RULE OF
CHRISTIAN LOVE.

A SERMON,

PREACHED ON THE

FEAST OF S. JOHN THE EVANGELIST,

MDCCCXL,

AT ST. PAUL'S CHURCH, BRISTOL,

IN AID OF A NEW CHURCH

TO BE ERECTED

IN AN OUTLYING DISTRICT IN THAT PARISH;

WITH A PREFACE

ON THE RELATION OF OUR EXERTIONS TO OUR NEEDS.

BY THE

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PREFACE.

THE following Sermon is published, as it was preached, if it may, in any way, aid in increasing the impulse, of late given to Church-building, and to self-denying charity, as shewn therein. In the exertions which have been made in this necessary work, during the last years, there is much reason, as in the restored Temple after the Captivity, for joy and thankfulness, still more for sorrow and humiliation: joy, that God is bringing back some few wanderers into His fold, out of the captivity of Satan; sorrow, that for each hundred restored, tens of thousands are, through our neglect, still wandering in the pathways of death; joy, in that in these exertions, inadequate and imperfect as they have been, we may see "the good hand of our God upon us" rousing us from our past listlessness, and leading us forward to increased performance of duty, of which we may trust that the present beginnings are but the dim morning-dawn; for sorrow and humiliation, in that, as a nation, we have so little profited either by mercies or by warnings, and have fallen so short of the stirrings of His hand. And unless we humble ourselves, there is little hope that God will raise us up to do deeds more worthy of our Christian Name. Boasting of our new Churches, our deeds and contributions, blinds ourselves, and must be displeasing to Almighty God. New Churches, if we were indeed faithful, would be

an ordinary daily sight, (for it was calculated long ago that to provide for our increasing population alone, omitting the deep debt already contracted, a Church should be built daily,) so ordinary a sight, that it would be rather strange not to see them rising. As it is, the sight should humble us, because it is its rareness which makes each new Church a source of so much gladness. We have been mixing too much self-gratulation with the rightful joy, that something has been done among us for God's glory and the souls of men; all works of duty and mercy have their allotted joy: yet more may it be a joy, if in this renewed anxiety to fulfil on a larger scale forgotten duty, we may venture to recognize the tokens of our Master's Countenance, looking graciously upon this portion of His Church, and by His look, quickening it. Yet such as we have been and are, that Look rather bids us "Repent and do our first deeds," "remember whence we are fallen," than imparts the bright joy of those who have not so fallen; it is a gracious Look, bestowed, we trust, upon us as upon St. Peter, recognizing and restoring us to be an Apostolic Church, as him to be an Apostle; but not until, with him, we have "gone out and wept bitterly." We are apt to speak of the neglect of our immediate forefathers, of the slumber of the last century, of their neglect^a to provide for the growing population, of their leaving to us their task and burthen to bear as well as our own; and, because we are doing something ourselves, we contrive to hide from ourselves that we are rehearsing the same sad tale of neglect and listlessness

^a Yet in those times, one Nobleman, of whom the author knows, built four village Churches, one very handsome, and four parsonage houses: has this individual exertion, though now happily re-commencing, been so common among us, that we dare take on ourselves to judge those times?

and indevotion; if they were losing ground, so are we; if they were allowing the wants to accumulate, to be supplied (if at all) by posterity, so are we; if they were but little aware of the extent of the deficiency, and did (as it is alleged) well-nigh nothing, we do but little, though we have not even their excuse; we know, complain, of our wants, yet set ourselves not in earnest to remove them; "spiritual destitution" is become a current phrase, yet while we acknowledge thereby both the misery and duty, we remedy it not: if they threw the duty upon the State, and shielded themselves under its neglect, we acknowledge that the State will not help us, and yet put not our shoulder under the yoke to help ourselves. If they were asleep, we are but like persons in their first waking, unconscious of what is going on around us, whether we are going backwards or forwards, making uncertain unstedfast motions here and there, and thinking and telling people that we are awake, because we have ceased to be fast asleep. We may indeed trust that it will yet be well with us, if this awakening end in our being awakened; yet if we comfort and congratulate ourselves on our present state, it is too like the voice of the sluggard, "A little sleep, a little slumber, a little more folding of the hands to sleep, until poverty come as one that travelleth, and want as an armed man."

The powers of evil are awake, ever on the watch; we see their stirrings, the musterings of their hosts; we feel their approach, their very breath; we speak with terror of Chartism and Socialism; we feel that in the heathen population of our places of manufacture or our mines, there is a moral contagion generated, polluting our atmosphere, choking our breath, and greater than we can know of or conceive: our ills are the greater because we know not what to look for, what form they may assume,

and so also, what form they may not assume ; when and how they may not start up upon us ; we know that they are withheld by no visible might, but by an Unseen Hand, yet betake not ourselves in earnest to find protection under the shadow of That Hand ; we speak currently and familiarly and even well, of an approaching conflict of the kingdoms of Light and darkness, of Christ and Belial, and yet arm not ourselves in earnest for the battle, nor seek to Him Who alone can avert it. We seem like those of old, who were “ eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day when Noe entered into the ark, and the flood came, and swept them all away.”

Meanwhile, we are congratulating ourselves, as if all were now right ; we hear here and there of plans of ten Churches for some vast town, or fifty for our Metropolis, which is one ninth of our whole people ; and, unaccustomed to the like, think that all will now be well ; or a fund is raised by instalments for successive years, and the sums so subscribed make a fair show ; and in this we rest ; the effort is made, and we contemplate it and ourselves in it as though we might account ourselves charitable or safe, and had done not only enough, but a work of supererogation, (so much we seem to admire it,) in having done one deed of Christian charity for the relief of the spiritual starvation of millions ; (as though having done a duty once, were a reason for having done with it, instead of persevering in it ;) meanwhile, year by year glides by unmarked ; the Churches are slowly raised ; and long before they are finished, the growing population has far outstripped our lagging steps ; the giant growth of our numbers, though silent, stops not ; it makes not one effort, like our contributions, and then stands still ; it rests not, day nor night ; undiminished by foreign war, and as yet by domestic

sedition, unvisited by God's immediate scourges of famine and pestilence, it swells upon us, year by year, a mighty torrent of human souls, gathering fresh strength every where, enlarging every instant, in well-nigh every place, unheard, unheeded, but unceasing and universal, and growing almost visibly under our eyes, if we would but mark it; pent in as yet within the bounds of human law, and stilled by Him, Who "ruleth the raging of the sea, and the noise of his waves, and the madness of the people," but ready to burst forth and overwhelm our land, if ever He should withdraw His merciful "Hitherto shalt thou come and no further;" and while we might fence it in, and conduct it on safely to eternity's endless, boundless, ocean, through the widening channel of the Church, we neglect it. Year by year, we may have some few thousands more inclosed within the Church; yet year by year we have also fresh tens of thousands shut out from her; more Christians, yet far more Heathen also; more light, yet increased darkness. And who then is to guarantee to us that this growing darkness shall not extinguish the light, which we are at so little cost and pains to keep alive? or, if we have still hope in God's past and present mercies to our Church, that our "candlestick" shall not be "removed," nor our "light put out in obscure darkness," where is our pledge that we shall not be left alone, as "an ensign on the top of the mountains, or a beacon on a hill," a monument at once of God's mercy and His wrath, kept alive, like His former people, "for the fathers' sake," yet widowed of all those children, whom God "begat and nourished up" for us, but whom we have failed to keep for Him? It is painful to quote solemn words, lest they prove our condemnation, and we be "bearing witness" and passing sentence against ourselves; yet what is this but attesting that we are the children of the fathers, whom in words we condemn, and in deeds

we imitate, so far from repairing the negligence we condemn in them, that we fail in our duty as they failed in theirs? Why, then, unless we repent and apply ourselves more earnestly to our duties, should it not be said to us, "Truly, ye allow the deeds of your fathers;" "fill ye up then the measure of your fathers, that on you may come"—one shrinks from giving any conclusion to these words, but that they may not fall upon us, and that the blood of those, whom we leave to live and die as Heathen, be not visited upon us, we have much need of more faithful self-denying exertion.

But how old are we, that we should be speaking of the sins and neglect of our forefathers rather than of our own? Are we or they responsible for what took place between 1811 and 1831? or if the generation immediately before us were united with us, are we free? In those twenty years, we, for the most part, were living, acting, hearing what went on around us, and God's word exhorting us by our hopes and our fears, by God's love and His wrath, to have mercy on Christ's poor, nay, we were ourselves praying for the coming of His kingdom and the doing of His will, before we prayed for our daily bread or the forgiveness of our sins; we were praying daily or weekly for His Church, for "our Bishops, Curates, and the congregations committed to their charge:" and yet in these same twenty years, notwithstanding two parliamentary grants, amounting to £1,500,000, while the increase of the population was nearly 4,000,000, the increase of church-room was but 500,000^b: that is, on the lowest and most inadequate calculation, in those twenty years, there were added to our people two millions and a half of undying souls, for whose salvation no provision whatever was made by a Christian state, or an Apostolic Church; two

^b Report of Windsor and Eton Church Union Society, 1839, quoted in *British Critic*, No. 54, p. 468.

millions and a half were added to the sins of our immediate forefathers; mostly, in name as well as in life and in vices, Heathen, and perhaps less miserable, because they were so, but, except as so far as God's love may, by a dispensation secret to us, undo the effects of our want of love, left to perish for ever. These were our deeds; those whom in those twenty years we left to be added to the existing Heathenism, were equal to one fourth of the whole population of England before them. Whatever then we may since have done, or be doing, were it ten-fold what it is, those twenty years,—in which not our fathers only, but we were involved,—saw a phænomenon, the like of which, for its frightfulness, was never seen in any Christian Church since her beginning hitherto, from the day that the Sun of righteousness dawned upon this earth,—that, in the bosom of one Church, there sprung up two millions and a half of Heathen; that, instead of souls being “added to the Church,” the scions of the vine which God had planted here were left to grow wild; the offspring of our own bowels, the children of our own Church, were shut out from her who is the image of heaven, and who was the appointed instrument and Ark to conduct us thither. The number of Heathen added to the people in these twenty years was at the lowest estimate, nearly twice as many as souls “added to the Church;” they were equal to one fourth of all who ought to have been, or were gathered into the Church before them; one fourth of all who would have been refreshed under her shadow, had she still retained the full blessing of her God and Maker Who planted her and “filled the land.” It is difficult to realize this painful fact, that had all England before been one Church, there has, within twenty years, sprung up a nation within her, alien to her and often hating her and the Gospel and the Light, equal in magnitude to one fourth of what she was, before those twenty years began.

This was what we left undone; and what did we? We, nationally and individually, built, rebuilt, enlarged, repewed, galleried Churches^c, which our fathers built,—and of this far the most in what cost the least, contriving that the ancient structures which our fathers built to God's glory, should, after in a way little seemly or favourable to devotion, hold more worshippers—but in all these ways together, we contrived to provide room for 500,000 additional persons, grown people and children together; i. e. on an average, for 25,000 in each year, and this throughout all the counties of England, and aided, alas! one must rather say, chiefly, by a grant of £1,500,000, which because raised out of the general resources of the nation, we none of us felt individually. Twenty-five Churches containing 1000 each,—had they been so much as this, whereas the room was chiefly gained by cheaply re-adapting what our forefathers had bequeathed to us, but had it even been gained by building new Churches,—twenty-five Churches would have been the offering annually made by this wealthy country, collectively and individually throughout its fifty-two counties; one Church in each two years would have been the quota furnished by each

^c It was painful to see in former years in the Reports of the Church-building Society, how small a portion of its contributions went to assist in building new Churches; the most was employed in eking out somehow by new pews, or galleries, or otherwise, those already existing. And since in almost every new Church, the first consideration was, how much of the burthen could be shifted off persons' own shoulders upon that Society, it implied how few Churches were then built. The last report of that Society acknowledges the fact, in speaking with thankfulness of a change. "Of the number of grants made during the last year, it is satisfactory to find how large a proportion [nearly half, the whole were 132] is for new Churches and Chapels, amounting together to 58, a number greatly above the average of former years." In 1839 it was but 31; in 1835, but 27.

County for His service, Who makes us this great and wealthy nation. There are even sadder recollections than this penuriousness, how in wealthy towns, because the Parliamentary grant was to be made up by a rate within itself, heart-burnings have been left to this day, and this unhallowed strife about Church-rates had its birth in the very little which was done to provide Church-room for our Christian poor. And this notwithstanding that, one must perhaps rather say, *because*, our money was multiplied by, and in proportion to, our population. We were gorged with wealth; we knew not how to employ it; every wild scheme, which could be devised as a vent for it, and to bring in some earthly return, was eagerly caught at; we knew not what to do with it; it yielded but little interest, because there was so much of it, and so little means of employing it; and the only assured treasure-house, the only safe interest which repays "an hundred-fold," we would not have; we would not lend it to Almighty God, although we had His holy promise, "what he layeth out shall be repaid him again," yea though God Almighty, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, Who deigns to be considered our debtor, promised to repay us Himself, and His payment is Himself.

There should be then, even on this ground, an end, for ever, of the boasting wherewith we compensate ourselves nationally for our individual disclaimers of any merit or intrinsic acceptableness of our good works, as though we might safely take credit to ourselves for the sums which we have raised for circulating the Bible in foreign languages, and converting a few scattered Heathen here and there, while we allowed a large nation of Heathen to spring up among ourselves, unconverted, unnoticed, uncared for, and sent out nations of heathens, in part with the worst vices of the worst of Heathens, to colonize the world.

But sad as those twenty years were, the last ten years, which we may account wholly ours, are probably, in respect of the actual increase of destitution, still sadder; and the denser the Heathen population becomes, the denser must the darkness be, the less penetrated by the light even of the surrounding Christianity, the more inaccessible to it, the more hopeless, the more sinful, blacker in itself and more threatening to us. It is said that "the evil has been fearfully aggravated by the discontinuance of the Parliamentary grant^d." The disclosure, which the approaching census will lay bare, is too probably one, from which any thoughtful heart must shrink. In the metropolis alone, not merely during the whole period, but during the very years in which the Bishop of London's cheering exertions were made, the destitution became greater than before. Had the forty-one Churches, which are to be completed through the fund hitherto raised, been already finished, and so "147,600 persons been brought within reach of the ministrations of the Church and the pastoral superintendence of her Clergy," "the *actual extent* of spiritual destitution," we are told^e, would be "greater now than it was when the operations of this Fund commenced." And yet this was an effort, which drew the eyes of the whole Church! it was begun and carried on upon a scale larger than any of late years; contributions were, from their scale, more self-denying; God blessed the work, and multiplied "the cruse of oil," although they who were ready to pour it out, not now at a prophet's but at their Lord's bidding, were comparatively few. And if we were losing ground in the very place where the chief exertion was made, during the very years of that exertion, how must the five barren years of the decennium "withered, thin, and

^d British Critic, ib.

^e Fourth Report of the Metropolis Churches Fund, p. 10.

blasted by the east wind," in which "the famine was very grievous," have "consumed the land;" how must they have eaten up the five—if for the earnestness' sake of our Bishop and those who aided him, one may dare call them—"good" years! and if this were so here, what must be the history of the whole compass of our unhappy land, town by town, factory after factory.

Nor is this all, which these ten years have to witness against us. We have been relieving ourselves of the pressure of our population by a thoughtless system of colonizing, exporting the members of our Church, as though they had been sheep and oxen for the slaughter, not Christian men. We have in Australia alone laid the foundation of what in the course of a century will probably be four mighty empires or, as we are now acting, republics'; but, if our exertions be only such as they have hitherto been, four Heathen states, whether empires or republics, with a weakly Church, keeping by God's mercy a seed of life in her, a light amid the surrounding darkness, yet scarcely such a light, as the Christian Church was in the times

f "There is the great Continent of New Holland, upon the shores of which, north, east, south, and west, settlements are daily forming, which in the natural course of events, and through the possession of so many natural advantages, must in the course of a century or less become the seats of so many flourishing kingdoms, or (as our rational policy tends, I fear, rather to make them) republics. There is the great island of Van Diemen's Land, which must form a separate and most important member of the great confederation, growing by accretion, like the coral reefs which surround us: there are the islands of New Zealand recently added to the before inordinate extent of this diocese; and there are the multitude of the islands of the Pacific clustering around, and from their position certain of being, at no remote period, brought into our political vortex; and under *some* form of worship and discipline, to be included among the numbers who profess the Christian faith." Extract of a letter from the Bishop of Australia.

and in the midst of Heathen Rome, unless the Heathen power, which our negligence is fostering, persecute the Church, and she through suffering be purified by those who might have been her children, and by suffering regain some of those whom she might now retain with joy.

And now what is to be the history of the next ten years, if ten peaceful years are allowed to our Church and State without any intestine convulsion, which, earnestly as we may hope and pray for, who dare promise? Is there hope but that

*Ætas parentum, pejor avis, tulit
Nos nequiores, mox daturos
Progeniem vitiosiore;*

that the Heathenism which we have been engendering, will not yield a more fearful death-crop? Amid much of fear, there are some cheering signs; some streaks of light amid gathering darkness; but if we are to escape political, it must be by a moral and religious, revolution; a revolution, not changing our Church, a word in her Liturgy, or a phrase in her Articles, but changing us, conforming us to her spirit, breathing fresh life into us, teaching us to act up to her rules in the three great Christian duties, prayer, fasting, almsgiving, and all which these branch out into and include, dependence upon God, denial to self, love to men;—a revolution, “not coming with observation,” but wrought by that Blessed and renewing Spirit, Whose “kingdom is within” us. Of a dawn of that morning there are faint but cheering glimmerings; some, though among the rich they seem to be few, have struck into the right path of self-sacrificing charity; anonymous gifts of £6000, £5000, £4000, and £1000, mentioned in the Metropolis-Churches Reports, “furnish examples,” as it says, “which it is hoped may be speedily followed.” It may lawfully be hoped, since our hope is not in man

but in God : it is not whether the tide be setting in rapidly or no, whether we be moving slowly and toilsomely up hill or no, but in which direction we be going, up hill or down it, whether the tide be ebbing or be turned. At the turning, it will be scarcely perceptible which way the tide is moving ; but, so it have turned, the barren shore will in time be covered ; dry and prickly is the plant, which is the first token of vegetation and life among the recovered sands, but it is a sure herald that where fresh life has been infused, however meagre, flocks will one day find pasture there ; we may be moving slowly, yet if the eye is looking upwards, we may hope to reach our home. But the very condition of our restoration is the acknowledgment of our deficiencies.

It is but the very beginning of a new course, upon which we are setting out, fettered by the iron chains of evil habits, universal to us ; and as we could not have set out one step of ourselves, no neither can we of ourselves add one step to those we have taken ; much less, persevere to the end. The course upon which we were, and as a nation, still are, was preference of self to God ; the course, of which we trust there are some slender beginnings, is the preference of God to self. The habits of any luxurious nation, like ourselves, are to spend largely upon self ; self is its idol ; “ luxury,” says Bishop Horsley, “ renders every man selfish upon principle ;” our own houses, our grounds, if we have them, our own persons, tables, furniture, equipage, attendants, are its first object ; the first thing to be regarded, that which is essential to us ; it is taken for granted that these are to be provided with “ all that the soul lusteth after ;” no matter for expense here, if the eye be but gratified ; nay in very wantonness, people multiply things which no ways minister unto their comfort, as when they cover their tables with prints, which

scarce occupy a passing gaze, or with ornaments, which they never regard, and which are an encumbrance. When all these things have been heaped around, then people think it a great thing, if some petty sum be spared to Almighty God. It matters not, they in fact say, how mean the buildings to His Great Name are; ornaments in His Temple, its architecture, its windows, its Altar, are waste; they have discovered,—at least they act as though they understood,—that the ways of the world and of the Church should be different, and evince their sense of the difference by sparing no cost or luxury upon self, and thinking nothing too mean and poor for the service of their Maker; so many Churches are needed, that it is to be held wrong to expend money upon ornament, on tower or spire; it is held out as an inducement to give that “the strictest economy is to be observed;” that “the sacred character” is, at best, to be “combined with economy;” it is made a condition that nothing be “expended on superfluous ornament;” there are, it is said, so many calls, that nothing beyond what is barely necessary should be employed on each; and people forget, the while, that the one ever-exhausting, unceasing, call, which dries up and drains off all their charities, is self in some changing form of luxury.

The Catholic (i. e. the primitive, Apostolic) model upon which our forefathers, amid partial darkness, yet acted, was, preference of God to self. Austere to themselves, they sought their glory in the glory of God; their joy, their glory, their happiness, was to see the holy pile, year by year, rise heavenwards, although themselves hoped to be translated to Paradise ere it was completed; when reared, they filled it with painted windows, that no object of the outward world might intrude upon their devotions, but even the very instruments of transmitting light might convey

spiritual light and edification also; they lived in its services, its walls were their home, ever open to receive them; through it they were to be transmitted, they hoped, to their long home; and so as the house of their God, it was their joy to ornament it, rather than to dwell in "ceiled houses" themselves. What is first in a man's affections finds no lack; a narrow income is found large enough to supply his chief, first, wishes: year by year, they spend or accumulate upon this one object, until we may be amazed how with such means they have wasted or heaped together so much. Any one almost would be surprised and startled to find how much himself had spent in twenty years, of how much expenditure, which passed away unperceived, he has to give account to God, when his stewardship is to be given up. Be God the first object, and in this wealthy nation, we should have enough and to spare; in whatever degree He becomes such to us, our wants will be mitigated; unless He, in some degree, become such, we are lost. When people in earnest seek Him first, they will be surprised to find how much of the wants of their poor neighbours they might readily supply; how many thousands in this wealthy nation might annually build a Church to Almighty God, and not miss what they expend, so that they at the same time somewhat retrenched expenditure upon self: or, since the very rich will mostly be the last to "enter the kingdom of heaven" or take the road thither, how by saving out of a moderate income (professional or other) a few hundreds yearly, an individual might, in the course of not many years, provide a village Church^f; if persons had but £10 to spare annually,

^f Littlemore Church, in the diocese of Oxford, whose walls are built, as befits a Church which is to remain until our Lord comes, and dug deep so as to be founded on a rock, cost somewhat under £1000. It contains 200.

ten such persons might in ten years, provide one^g: would we, in providing for our families according to S. Augustine's^h beautiful suggestion, regard Christ as an additional son, and give to Him, Who is "more to us than ten sons," our only Hope for ever, give to His poor, the portion of one child, what wants might not, in this wealthy nation, be supplied, and our families be not the poorer, but enriched, in that they had (to speak reverently) enrolled among them their Redeemer, in Whose "hands are all things in heaven and in earth!" Were the offertory restored, how might the increase of our stores be consecrated, our poor provided for, our rich gain almost insensibly the true treasure!

The restoration depends much upon the Clergy; there is much feeling left in our nation; much susceptibility ready to answer the call; much high principle, which would be ready to sacrifice self, as soon as the thought of such sacrifices being acceptable should be brought before it; we must preach self-denial, and practise what we preach; preach, not once or twice, but again and again, until people's minds become familiarized to the thought, that we have responsibilities towards those, by whose labour our comforts are supplied; that we have no right to draw human souls together to "minister to us in carnal things," our manufactures, our commerce, our fuel, our clothing, our ease in our places of resort, and not minister to them, in what measure we may, "in spiritual

^g This is being acted upon.

^h Serm. 355. (al. de div. 49.) S. Aug. is explaining why he refused certain gifts to the Church, as of one who had disinherited his son; he adds, "But if he did, what I often exhorted to; has he one son, let him account Christ a second; has he two, let him account Christ a third; has he ten, let him make Christ the eleventh, and I will accept it."

things." The rich have a duty wherever they go; they have no right to draw people to our vast metropolis, and, because they spend but a portion of their year there, profess that it is not their home, and as far as in them lies, destroy those whom they in fact brought there, but "for whom Christ died;" we have no right to go to seek health or refreshment, and though the village thus swells into a town with tens of thousands, profess that it is not our concern, because we are only a portion of the multitude who draws them thither; and so "follow that multitude to do evil." We have no right to wander about at will, as though we were our own lords and had not all One Lord, content ourselves to find houses and Churches, and full supply of all our needs, wherever we go, and regarding as aliens in whom we have no interest, those through whose agency God supplies all our wants, lest we be ourselves considered as aliens in His sight, Whose people we treat as aliens; we have no right to draw large incomes from places where we reside or reside not, and be careless of their welfare through whose labour "the earth yields her increase" or manufactures their wealth. These things we must repeat constantly; and if the many refuse to hearken, we shall have saved our own souls and those to whom God giveth "ears to hear." Least of all must we flatter ourselves or others on any increase which may be made in our contributions; our self-gratulation wastes us, and makes us stand still or fall back, instead of pressing onward; rather our habit of mind, in giving, should be to confess our unworthiness to give to His Great Name, our sinfulness in former or present wasting of His goods, the pooriness of our offerings, the worthlessness of the offerers; seeing and acknowledging the extent of our misery, and so substituting for boastfulness, humility; for self-gratulation, abasement; that so "for our shame we may have double,

and for confusion rejoice in our portion ;” and, in this spirit, praying God in the words of the most penitential Psalm, “ Be favourable and gracious unto Zion, build Thou the walls of Jerusalem ; *then* shalt Thou be pleased with the sacrifices of righteousness, with burnt-offerings and whole burnt-offerings ; then shall they offer bullocks upon Thine Altar.” As God looks graciously upon His Church, we may hope that He will look upon us in it, and “ accept the work of our hands,” in itself worthless, for His sake, Whose Body the Church is.

*Feast of the
Presentation of Christ in the Temple,
1841.*

A
S E R M O N.

CHRIST, THE SOURCE AND RULE OF CHRISTIAN LOVE.

S. JOHN xiii. 34, 35.

A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another.

TO-DAY is the festival of the Apostle of love: the "beloved disciple" of Him Who was and is Love; the Apostle who was, in an especial way, the beloved of Him, Who "loved His own which were in the world," and "loved them unto the end;" him did He choose in an eminent degree to declare to us love, that having drank in His love from His Saviour's breast whereon he lay, he might impart it to us; the love of God, and the love of man; the forecoming love of God to man, His inworked love in man to Himself, issuing forth in deeds of love to our fellow-men, whom, with us, He has loved. He, Who "distributeth to every man severally as He wills," and "assigns to every man his

work” in His great household, seems to have observed the same economy in inspiration also, and even when filling with the Holy Ghost the inspired ministers of His word, and making them His own oracles, to have allotted to each his especial office;—to the beloved Disciple to impart that which he had received, making him the herald of that love, wherewith he had been loved. He, whom our Lord so loved, that, loving all, it seemed as though He loved him alone; he, whom He took to be the son of His mother, giving him unto her, as it were, instead of Himself, when His earthly relations to her were now about to cease,—well might he speak of love; for he “spake of that which” he “knew,” and “testified that” he “had heard:” and well were it for us, whom God has permitted on this day to assemble on a work of love, to listen to his teaching, and honour him on this his holy day, by obeying the commandment which he delivers to us from his and our Lord.

For him then it was reserved to declare what God in Himself is, “God is love,”—not holiness or justice, though holy and just, but love; yet not loving only, but Love, though a Love, which cannot endure iniquity. The chief subject of his Epistle is love; the love of God towards us, in the death of Him Who was God; “hereby perceive we the love of God, because He laid down His life for us^a;”—its source in us, from Him, “herein is

^a 1 John iii. 16.

love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins ;” “ we love Him because He first loved us^b ;” the means, whereby the love of God is upheld in us, by keeping God’s commandments and loving our brethren ; “ if we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and His love is perfected in us^c ;” the nature of that love, “ not in word but in truth^d ;” not in professions of charity, or high-sounding speeches, or liberality in words, but in deeds, and specially in such deeds as we are this day called upon to do, deeds of compassion to them who have need ; “ whoso hath this world’s good and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him ?” lastly, the privileges of that love ; that thereby we “ abide in the light^e ;” “ we know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren^f ;” “ to assure our hearts before God^g ;” to “ have confidence in the Day of Judgment, because as He is, so are we in this world^h,” i. e. doing good, as He doth it, largely, unsparingly, regardless of unthankfulness, persevering, unwearied, seeking out every where whereon to bestow itself, finding entrance if not in one way yet in another, loving to communicate itself, shining alike on the evil and the good—this love is a proof that we retain our

^b 1 John iv. 19.^c iv. 12.^d iii. 17, 18.^e ii. 10.^f iii. 14.^g 19.^h iv. 17.

birth of God ; it hath the knowledge of God ; “ every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God¹ ;” it is dwelling in God, and His Indwelling in us, “ he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him¹ ;” and, with God, it hath eternal life dwelling in us, for God is life and love, life and love eternal, eternally abiding in them who live and love in Him, whose life and love He is.

What then is the nature of that love, which the Holy Ghost by St. John so commendeth to us ? what is it, which hath these promises annexed to it even in this life ; the knowledge of Him Who is Love ; the indwelling of His Love, the Son of His Love by His Spirit, the fruits of the Cross of Christ, of His love wherewith “ He loved us, and gave Himself as a propitiation for our sins ;” of the love of the Father “ Who gave His Only-Begotten Son, that whoso believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life ?”

What is Christian love ? is it the same in kind as God’s ancient people may have had, before the Son of God came in the flesh to make us “ sons of God ;” before, as man, the Holy Ghost descended upon Him, that we also might become in Him “ an habitation of God through the Spirit ?” are we safe while our love exceeds not the love of the Scribes and Pharisees, as we know we are not, unless our righteousness exceed theirs ?

Our Lord, in the text, decides this for us ; He

¹ 1 John iv. 7.

^k 16.

tells us, that it is a *new* command which He has given us, “ a new commandment I give unto you ;” that it shall be *the* mark of His disciples, “ by this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another.” It must, even from this, be something above the love of the Old Testament ; else had it not marked us out at once to be His disciples, as distinct from the Jews among and with whom the first Christians dwelt, and from whom our Lord was now separating His Apostles, as the foundations, in Himself, of the Christian Church : it must be “ new” because He calls it so.

It suffices not then for the meaning of the word “ new” that our Christian love should differ from that of the Jews, in that the Christian Name comprehends all people, nations, and languages, whereas the Jews were but one people : the command is that we “ love one another ;” Christians then being one family, there were nothing new and surpassing in this, that all Christians should “ love one another,” as all Jews were commanded to “ love one another.” The family is larger ; still the love between the members of one family is of the same sort, whether they be more or fewer. It suffices not, as others have said, that it is an ever-renewed command ; our Lord says not only “ renewed,” but “ new ;” nor again, as an ancient Bishop¹ says, that “ love is renewing, makes us new men, makes us heirs of the New Testament, worthy to

¹ S. Augustine, on the passage.

sing the new song of the Lamb." Love doth so, as being that whereby the Holy Spirit dwelleth in us, yet doth not this shew, wherein the "commandment" is "new." In like way, if it be said that this love belongeth to the new man, as new-created in Christ Jesus, derived from the "new Spirit of love, as the old from fear," this also is partly true, but not all. The full truth, as our Lord explains His own meaning, contains all these, and goes beyond them; the command is new, because it is a new kind of love which He enjoins; a love peculiar to the Gospel, as flowing from His Cross; and so a love inwrought in us as renewed by His Spirit, and renewing us by being inwrought, and embracing not one or other, but all whom His Blood hath redeemed.

Yet the love of the Old Testament was a lofty love, a righteous love; it flowed from the love of God: "the stranger that dwelleth among you—thou shalt love as thyself—I am the Lord thy God," are the very words of the Old Testament; our Lord bears witness to its teaching, "thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength; this is the first commandment; and the second is like this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." And these two commandments thus knit together, and each securing the real obedience to the other, He pronounces to be the very centre and substance of the Law and the Prophets; "on

these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets." It was no common love of man which was to flow from such intense, entire, love of God as this ; no common duty which was thus joined on, as *like* to the love of God. It must have been a love of man for God's sake, else had it not been a religious love ; it had been a natural earthly affection, not an act of piety and duty to God. Its rule is perfect, as far as it goes ; " thou shalt love him as thyself ;" it forbids every thing we would not have done to ourselves ; it enjoins every thing which we could desire for ourselves, if we were in our neighbour's stead. Thus essential in its character, as the very key-stone of the ancient dispensation ; holy in its source, as coming from God ; in its end, as loving man for the sake of God ; in its measures, as giving a strict rule of right, and shutting out all selfish preference of self, what was there lacking to it, or how could our Lord's command of love be a " new commandment ?"

Because the commandment of the Old Testament, though " holy, just, and good," was only such ; it was a love founded on justice rather than on mercy ; it forbade doing what we would not have done ; it bade to be done what we would have done ; but it flowed within these channels ; self was still the measure of its duty ; it had no expansive force to carry it beyond these bounds, bearing richness and mercy wherever it spread ; its pat-

tern and rule was man, not God ; it said, “ Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself,” not “ Thou shalt love him, as thy heavenly Father loves him.”

And herein was it chiefly that the commandment of our Lord was a “ new commandment,” that it proposed a new pattern, a new measure. Christian love is not the love of man for man ; it is a Divine love, after a Divine pattern, and so, widening and deepening endlessly ; it is to love man with the love wherewith God has loved him. For so our Lord goes on to say, “ that ye love one another ; *as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.*” It is a love, then, which as far as man may come up to it, is formed upon, and to realize the love of the Redeemer ; it is, as being members of Him, and so partakers of His Spirit, and capable of a Divine love, to love His other members, *as He loved them*, with a love which shall bear some likeness to His love for them.

How then did Christ love us ? Need one at any time ask Christians how their Saviour loved them ? need one especially ask them now, when we have just been praising Him, in that being “ God, and with God,” He “ for us and for our salvation, became man ;” in that, being Lord of all, He took upon Him “ the form of a servant ;” having “ the glory of the Father,” He took upon Him our shame ; holy, He took upon Him “ the likeness of” our “ sinful flesh ;” rich in the love of the Ever-blessed Trinity, for our sakes “ He became

poor ;” full, “ He emptied Himself ;” “ the Everlasting Son of the Father” did not “ abhor” to be born anew in time of “ the Virgin’s womb ;” He, the immortal, “ overcame,” by tasting it, “ the sharpness of death ;” He, Whom the Father loveth ineffably, as He the Father, bore for us the wrath of the Father, Whom He loved. As saith the Apostle, “ Being in the form of God, He thought it nothing to be desired to remain equal with God, but emptied Himself, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of man ; and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself” (yet farther), “ and became obedient unto death, and that the death of the Cross,” seeking in each act of humiliation a lower depth, whereunto for us to abase Himself. “ Ye know,” he saith again, “ the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He were rich, yet for our sakes He became poor, that we through His poverty might be rich^m.” “ He, Who knew no sin, was made sin for us ;” “ it pleased the Lord to bruise Him ; He put Him to grief ; the Lord laid upon Him the iniquity of us all.”

Our Lord then (to speak reverently on such a subject, yet as ancient Fathersⁿ speak) “ loved us not *as* Himself, but more than Himself.” For us He left the worship and praise of the Heavenly Host, to seek His one lost sheep in this our wilder-

^m 2 Cor. viii. 9.

ⁿ See note A at the end.

ness ; for us, He endured the humility of the Incarnation, “ the contradiction of sinners against Himself,” “ the blasphemy of the multitude,” to be rejected by His own unto whom He came ; to be betrayed by a disciple ; to be dishonoured, as though He Himself blasphemed His Father Whom He honoured : He hid not His face from shame and spitting ; “ the reproaches of them which reproached” His Father “ fell on” Him. What should one more say ? It behoves us to speak reverently and warily in these depths of mystery ; yet this we must say, that of all these sufferings we know the outward face only ; we know that they must have been far other than we can think of, that all these sufferings were heightened, perhaps had their real character from that which we know so little of—His holiness, as resulting from His Divinity, which enabled His human nature to bear its load of suffering. What to His holiness must have been the approach of His fallen Angel Satan, to tempt Him ? What to be accounted a blasphemer of His Father ? What to see those harden themselves, whom He came to save ? What, to know that His word must at the last Day condemn of those whom, in their own day, He “ would have gathered under” His “ wings” and they “ would not ?” What that mysterious agony, which wrung from Him those heavy words, “ Father, if it be possible, let this Cup pass from Me ; nevertheless not as I will, but as Thou wilt ?”

Such, then, Brethren, is the length and breadth and depth of our “new commandment ;” its pattern, our loving Master, Who was God and man ; its foundation, His inestimable love in our redemption ; its extent, His infinity : it was given to us in sight of His Cross ; when the traitor had just gone forth to deliver Him into the hands of sinners, and, with the traitor, all which was not love, was gone forth ; it was given, while He was even yet speaking of that Death whereby God should be glorified in the Son, and so should Himself glorify Him when He had first been consecrated through sufferings. Such was it with regard to Him ; and as to us, it was given, the one command amid all those gracious promises, of the aid of the other Comforter, which should make even the loss of the sight of our Saviour, gain ; of abiding in His love, as He in His Father’s love ; His abiding in us for ever ; the abiding of our fruit ; the Indwelling of the Son with the Father by the Spirit ; His invisible coming to us ; His peace left with us : amid all these gracious assurances, wherein He seems to pour out all the treasures of His love, He gives this one command, with the promise, “whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in My Name, I will give it you ;” He gives it as His one command ; “*This is My* commandment, that ye love one another, as I have loved you.”

And, in each place, our Lord speaks it in regard to suffering ; in the text, of those sufferings whereby “the Son of Man” should be “glorified, and God”

be “ glorified in Him ;” and again°, “ This is My commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. Ye are My friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you ;” that is, I am about to lay down My life for you ; and thus have made you My friends ; I have admitted you to partake of My counsels, My love, My Self ; I have made you, in your measure, such as I am, since a friend beareth a likeness to his friend, is one with him ; if ye would continue My friends, ye must be like Me, love as I have loved, do as I have done, be ready to suffer, one for the other, as I have suffered ; the disciples of the Crucified must not “ count” aught of their own, their wealth, ease, comfort, nay their very lives, “ dear unto themselves,” if by parting with them, they may do good to their brethren ; none of these things are their own but His Who bought them with His own precious Blood, that whether they live or die, they should be His ; if they themselves, soul, body, spirit, are not their own but His, Who created, redeemed, regenerated them, how should aught besides ? how should they withhold from Him what is His ? how should they not gladly join their own sufferings with His, for those who with them, by virtue of the same Blessed Sacrifice and Sacrament, are also His ?

And thus the beloved disciple explains His Lord’s words, “ Hereby perceive we love, because He laid

° John xv. 12—14.

down His life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren^p," that is, as His love passeth into us, so ought it to bear like fruit in us; the disciples of Him Who bare the sorrows of us all, should be ready to bear each other's sorrows; the disciples of Him Who withheld nothing from us, should themselves keep back nothing; the followers of Him, Who gave Himself for us that we might live, should gladly give their earthly lives, if so they might win those for whom with us He died.

And as our Lord calls this "His command," so St. Paul speaks of obedience to it as the fulfilment of His law; "Bear ye one another's burthens, and so fulfil *the law of Christ*;" and of him the Holy Ghost witnesseth, that "in his flesh he filled up that which was behind of the afflictions of Christ for His body's sake, which is the Church;" that is, though all meritorious sufferings were Christ's alone, yet did He bequeath to His Church a precious gift, which was to belong to all His more chosen vessels, even a certain residue of His own sufferings; their sufferings for Him and His body the Church He joins to His, and accounts them His own; yea they are His own, since He is persecuted in His members, He hungers, thirsts, is sick and in prison, in His members; the marks of the stripes, and the iron bonds, are "the marks of the Lord Jesus," which they "bare about" them. And they rejoice, not in suffering only like Him,

^p 1 John iii. 16.

but that they are partakers of *His* sufferings; “that I may know,” says St. Paul, “the fellowship of His sufferings,” and, “as the sufferings of Christ abound in us^q,” and St. Peter, “Rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ’s sufferings^r,” they are Christ’s own sufferings, which overflow into them as true branches of the True Vine; His sufferings, in that they are borne through His Spirit, in Him, for Him, by Him; they are fruits, to the end of time, of His Cross; they are images, and shadows, and reflections of that Cross, shining in its glory, streaming down some of its lights upon us, tokens of Its Presence and Power, witnesses that we are yet the same Church, for whom Christ suffered.

Well then may it be called “a new commandment,” since its character is derived from the very depths of that new disclosure of God’s mercy in Christ, which had been but dimly shadowed out in the law; which “Prophets and kings desired to see, and saw not;” which in times past was hidden from men and Angels. The new commandment belongs to that “new and better covenant, established upon better promises,” whereof our Lord is Mediator, and not man; that “new covenant” in which God’s commandment should no longer be an outward letter which killeth, but in which He would “put His laws into their minds,” and they should be the law and rule of

^q 2 Cor. i. 5.

^r 1 Pet. iv. 13.

their minds ; a new covenant, in which we “ have confidence to enter into the holiest by the Blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He hath consecrated for us through the vail, that is His flesh^s ;” a new covenant, in which “ old things are passed away and all things are become new ;” it belongs to us, as we have been stripped of the old man, and are become new creatures, having been renewed, re-generated, re-created in Christ Jesus ; bearing a “ new Name,” even our Redeemer’s, which in Holy Baptism was named upon us ; it is given to us, with a new Spirit, new powers, new hopes, new faith, new capacity to love, in that we have been so loved.

And well did the first disciples fulfil this new law and our Lord’s prediction, “ by this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another.” What is the history of the Apostles but the history of a sharing of their Saviour’s sufferings for His Body’s sake ? What of the Bishops for centuries, but that, following the steps of the Chief Bishop Whom they represented, they were delivered to death and suffering, that the other sheep might escape ? What of the whole extension of the Gospel in all lands, but of the good seed sown every where by Christian blood, harrowed in by Christian suffering, and so yielding a harvest of souls won to Christ ? What of the whole conduct of Christians to each other, but of

^s Heb. x. 19, 20.

self-denying love for each other, as in all, Greek or Barbarian, bond or free, near or far, known or unknown, seeing their unseen Lord, Whose sacred Name was called on all, hallowed all. "See," cried the heathen^t, "how the Christians love one another, and they are ready to die one for another." "Their lawgiver," says another^u, "has persuaded them, that they are all brethren." "They love one another," exclaimed yet a third^x, "almost before they know one another." And hereby *did* men know that they were His disciples, and learned to love Him, Whose love so lived in them; the love of Christians, we are told^y, drew the Heathen to the Faith yet more than miracles; and miracles impressed them, because their hearts were first won by the sight of Christian love; as, after that love waxed cold, the absence of the visible, strongly marked, tokens of that love was more objected to the Christian, than the loss of miracles^y which accompanied the declension of faith and love.

Nor is this a history of other times, in which we are not interested; among us too the Gospel was planted and renewed by the blood of martyrs; they who brought the Gospel to our then wild and inhospitable shores, endured cheerfully hunger and thirst and cold and nakedness and homelessness, and at last death, that they might win our rude

^t Ap. Tert. Apol. c. 39.

p. 567. ed. Græv.

ed. Ouz.

^u Lucian de Morte Peregr.

^x Cæcilius ap. Minut. Fel. p. 81.

^y S. Chrys. ad loc.

forefathers to Christ: had not the first founders of our Church loved our fathers more than themselves, we had been heathen still, sitting in the darkness of the shadow of death, “without Christ, strangers from the covenant of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world:” because they had this love, we who were far off, have been brought near unto God; we have been made members of Christ, children of God, and are yet, as we humbly trust, heirs of heaven. And our Church, of old, in its turn sent forth Apostles and Martyrs; the Vine, thus planted among us, “sent forth her boughs unto the sea, and her branches unto the river,” having first “struck deep root and filled our land;” the Churches, wherein we yet, wherever we go, worship God, and bring all our needs before Him, are mostly the fruits of others’ love; the provision for our ministers, of others’ loving liberality, who gave of their own that we might for ever benefit by their gifts.

Such and much more hath God done for us through the love of man, flowing out of the love of His Son. “Beloved, if God hath so loved us, we ought also to love one another.” “Freely have ye received,” saith our Lord, “freely give.” Or beseemeth it us, who have received so largely at the hands of God through man, ourselves to do little to fill up that which yet remaineth? beseemeth it us to be enjoying the benefits of the self-denial of others, in ease and self-indulgence and sloth?

My brethren, we must speak plainly in this matter ; we are not what our forefathers were ; we boast of the light of the Gospel which is shed around us, but it is to us a powerless light, it warms us not to those deeds of self-denial and love to which they were trained, amid much comparative darkness. If the men of Nineveh shall rise up against the generation which saw the miracles of our Lord, how much more shall our forefathers, who, living in what we call darkness, did the deeds of light, which we do not ! This very city, wherein this house of God stands, exhibits in the very face of heaven the deeds of our forefathers, and our own. It is sad to behold it from the fair eminence of the neighbouring heights, whither its rich men have for health or comfort so often retreated, to see it, as they too must see it, set as it were in the garden of the Lord, one part of it thickly studded with churches, whose towers or spires pierce the skies, and bear witness to the deeds of our fathers,—and then to look on to a long waste of human habitation, unsanctified by the presence of a single temple of our God, or with one, here and there, as a resting-place amidst a desert, and to see therein our deeds. It is sad to see how every portion of *their* city is hallowed by the presence of temples of their God, rich, lofty, more capacious than was needed absolutely to contain their inhabitants, so that this

ancient city was the “city of Churches” ;” and how ours seems to betoken (God forbid it should continue so) who has been our god, “the god of this world :” how in theirs their churches, as their hopes, rose to heaven ; how ours creeps along the ground, a low dark mass of earthly building, the workshops of our gains ; or if aught rises heavenwards, they are the instruments of this world’s wealth, the masts of our vessels ; as though we would say, in the very presence of God, to Whom our forefathers reared those hallowed piles, “these be *thy* gods, O Israel.” It is sad to see how a part of your Cathedral, destroyed in civil war to which God once left us, still, after two centuries, remains unrestored, bearing witness against us, century after century, that we come not up to the measure of our fathers ; we not only do not deeds like theirs, we do not even sustain the monuments of piety which they left us. But edifices such as these, it will be said, are superfluities ; be it so ; only let us measure ourselves by the same rule whereby we measure our service to God, and then speak of “superfluities” in the honour and service of Almighty God, when we have cut off all from ourselves ; let us not be sparing and niggard in the worship of our Creator, and lavish upon self !

^z Chatterton also says,

Thys quaintissed place so glorious
Seemeynge alle chyrches joyned yn one guylde.
Parlt. of Sprytes, near the end.

But what shall we say then of *necessities*? What will ye plead, when it appears that in three parishes alone in this wealthy city, nearly 26,000 persons, (such were the wants ten years ago, and now through the increase of population employed in the increase of your wealth the wants too are much increased ^a,) in three parishes alone of this wealthy city, nearly 26,000 undying souls are left to pass year by year from their cradle to their graves, are left, like beasts, to perish, outcasts from the Church and from the gate of heaven, left, at best, to find shepherds for themselves, as they may, but the most to fall an easy prey to Satan, because none has fenced them round in the fold of Christ's Church; left to live and die in carelessness and sin, because they who could have helped them would not, they to whose love and care our loving Lord committed them, loved them not?

What, when this single Church, containing scarce 1,000 souls, and these mostly persons connected with

	population	now probably	Church room	addition since	deficit in 1831	deficit in 1841
^a S. Paul's	12,641	16,000	965		9,746	13,105
S. Philip } and S. Jacob }	19,663	22,163	3,800		8,263	10,763
S. James	11,488	12,988	1,200	1000	7,888	6,388
	<hr/> 43,792	<hr/> 51,151	<hr/> 5,965	<hr/> 1000	<hr/> 25,897	<hr/> 30,256

Two Churches, which the body, holding the patronage of St. Philip and St. Jacob, propose to build, containing 2,400 persons, would reduce its deficiency considerably; but while these are being built, besides the continual increase of the population, “a large accession will be taking place through a large cotton manufactory lately established, and now quite in its infancy.”

the wealthier sort, is hitherto the only provision for a parish containing (ten years^b past) nearly 13,000, now too probably 16,000 souls, and the good work, which you are called upon to aid—good and well-pleasing to God as far as it goes, and *as a beginning*—will, when accomplished, extend the blessings of the Gospel to 2,000 of your brethren, yet will it leave above 13,000 still destitute?

What shall we say, when in this worldly city, with such means at its command, the way to heaven seems (as far as man's will goes) barred to the poor man; scarcely any place of worship of any kind in the whole city receives the prayers of the poor, or is gladdened by the face of a poor man; the Church, the common refuge and Mother of all who will come to her, is not open to them; what are called free seats are occupied mostly by the servants of the rich; the poor are shamed to enter in, where so few, such as they, can find entrance! As though we had not all one Father! as though we were not all redeemed by the same Blood! as though we were not to appear before the same Judge, among other sins of our people, to account for the neglect

^b At the census of 1831 the "in-parish" of S. Paul's, in which the Church stands, was 9,146; of whom even at the insufficient rate of providing room in God's House for one third at once, 6,251 were excluded; the "out-parish" of Montpelier containing 3,495, now probably 6 or 7,000 souls, is hitherto wholly destitute. The new Chapel is intended for the out-parish, but to contain only about 700.

of His poor members—as though the prayers of the poor to Him, “ Who being rich, for our sakes became poor,” were not the wealth of any nation ! as if we meant to have no share in our Lord’s blessing, that “ the poor have the Gospel preached to them !”

And why is this ? why this difference between our fathers’ deeds and ours ? why while they erected Churches and provided ministers for each little groupe (if it so happened) of 1, or 2, or 400 souls^c, do we leave our twenty thousands unheeded ? Lack we the means ? Alas ! this wealthy city might readily supply all the wants and to spare, without even, on this world’s calculation, missing what they bestow. The Christian knows that such scattering would increase their stores. The goodly houses which encircle this Church, and shew so fair, shew no lack of means ; your warehouses crowded with this world’s goods, your shops filled with all manner of luxuries, imply no want of means ; the costly building even now rising in the town blended with this, for ends which end with this world, implies no lack of means. The difference lies not in our means, except that ours are far greater than our forefathers’ who built those goodly piles, but in our habits ; they “ sought first

^c The population of S. Werburgh was, in 1831, 100 ; All Saints, 180 ; S. Mary Le Port, 400 ; besides these, three Churches have been razed, within the memory of man, and the parishes which belonged to them joined on to others.

the kingdom of God and His righteousness," where-into they are now entered in rest, we "the things" which "the Gentiles sought;" they confessed Christ in deeds, we in words; they had a care for Christ's poor, we for our families; they practised self-denying charity, men now think it much, if they give out of superfluities; they thought it their highest glory to glorify God, we to aggrandize self; their habits were what we should think an austere and rude and self-denying simplicity, ours a soft and elegant and self-indulgent luxury; luxuries, which they knew not, we have made our essential comforts, and year by year heap up new luxuries; and furnish our houses with expenses which they knew not of, and cover our tables with needless profusion, and should think the fare of our forefathers coarse and hard; and ornament our houses with refinements, and our persons with "gold and costly array;" and we fence ourselves round with elegancies, until there is no way for the breath of Heaven to pass through, and breathe into our souls the spirit of charity; and if a somewhat larger sum be needed for some urgent Christian purpose, we give our own petty contributions, and make up the larger portion with the sale of baubles, (confessing that we cannot obtain what we want from men's Christian love,) and call this multiplying of our luxuries Christian charity! We have admitted the moth and rust among our treasures, so that we have none wherewith to make an offering

to God, or wherewith to purchase eternal treasures, or have not left ourselves the hearts to make it. We give guineas when we should give tens, and tens for hundreds ; and hundreds are given, when thousands might be given, and yet abundance left ; alas ! would one need not say, when tens of thousands might be readily spared, people grudge themselves their rich reward, and think well of themselves for some costless offering. But which were most like Him, Who for our sakes had not where to lay His head ? which were most conformed to the likeness of their Crucified Lord ? which most loved their brethren, *as* He loved them ? which have most treasure laid up with Him against the Great Day ?

This cannot last ; either our luxuries must destroy us, as they have every luxurious nation before us, or we must unlearn our luxuries, in order to learn the Cross and Christian charity ; we must learn to sacrifice self, in order to Christianize our land, or the Heathenism of our land will destroy us. You have, in this place, already had an awful warning of God's displeasure upon past neglect ; the wealth, which a few years ago was here burnt up^d, because out of it none had been spared to extend the blessings of the Gospel to the poor, would more than have provided this whole city

^d The loss by fire and pillage in the riots of Bristol were assessed at £100,000, which is now being levied by annual instalments.

with Churches, worthy of God's great Name; you have, in the flames which were kindled in the very heart of your city, consuming the idol on which men's hearts were set, that themselves might escape, had an earnest of that punishment which all are heaping up for themselves, who neglect Him; in their extinction, a token of His long-suffering: but beware how ye tempt that long-suffering; recollect that there is a Judgment, of which all temporal judgments are but forerunners; a fire, which God will not extinguish; suffering, of which there is no mitigation, no end; a doom, in which there is no Intercessor; and that these are especially reserved for such as, in this life, shewed no mercy to Christ's poor; that while fornicators, unjust, covetous, have no portion (we know) in the kingdom of heaven, yet in our Lord's own description of the Great Day, the sin, which He singles out for condemnation, is neglect of Him in His poor and suffering members.

But though we dare not leave out of sight God's terrors, which He so often sets before us, yet on this festival of the Apostle of love, in this season of our Saviour's love and great humility, He appeals rather to our love for Him, to lead us to this act of love to our brethren.

If, then, we "would be" as He is in this world, if we would follow His steps as our loving Master, if we would, not among men only but before His Father and the Holy Angels, be acknowledged as

His disciples, if we would receive a disciple's reward, if we would hear the gracious words, "Forasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me," there is but one way, one strait narrow way; the way of self-denying charity. Gifts, which are given out of our abundance, may gain us credit among men, they may shew a kindly spirit, such as the Jews were bid to cherish, but they are not tokens of Christian love. Alas! would that we were not put to shame by the very Jews! would that our righteousness came up even to theirs, and that we provided for our poor as they even now do for theirs! would that we, who are God's people, came up to them, who for the time are "not His people!" Of old they bestowed year by year one tenth of their substance on the poor, beyond the one tenth which they gave to God's Priests; yearly they retained but four fifths for themselves; one fifth of the increase wherewith God had blessed them, they gave to Him in His ministers and His poor; and each third year, they gave a third tenth to God.

And shall we then, on whom the very Name of the Son of God has been called, be content with a Jewish charity? shall we, on whom the light and love of the Gospel have been poured, fall short of the measures of the Law? have we no faith, no eyes to see, no hearts to look for, heavenly treasures? shall we always be so fixed on the things of this passing world, as to have no sense left for the

things of eternity? shall we, year by year, celebrate the festivals of the self-denying love of our Master and only Saviour; year by year, accompany Him in outward gesture from the manger whither He descended from the highest Heavens, to the Cross whence He ascended thither again, and year by year hear Him in word and deed bid us love these our and His brethren *as* He has loved us, and yet go on, year by year, loving—not ourselves, but—the perishable comforts, luxuries, ease, of our perishing frames, and neglecting those whom He has committed to our love, until He come again and require of us an account of our stewardship, and of our deeds of love to those, in whom He bade us shew our love to Him? Shall we go on speaking of His Atoning Sacrifice; but ourselves sacrifice nothing; of His poverty for us, but have ourselves no thought except for this world's riches; of His humiliation for us, but ourselves seek only how to exalt ourselves and our families in this world; of His abandoning all His unspeakable glory, and ourselves seek our glory and credit in this passing scene; of His having “emptied Himself” of His inherent Majesty, and ourselves remain “full?” Not in words but in deeds did He love us, when He came down amid our sin and shame and sufferings, to be hated, scorned, crucified, to bear our sins; not in words but in deed do we hope that He will shew His love, in that Day in which if He

compassioneth us not with His exceeding love, we are undone for ever ; not in words then, but in deeds must be the love which we meanwhile shew to Him in His poor ; learning, slowly it may be, but day by day, to deny ourselves our own desires, to forego things, in which we should have pleasure, and what tempts the eyes, the taste, the senses ; looking not what we can afford to spend upon self, but what we may lawfully deny self ; not what additional comforts we may keep around us, but what indulgences which we have, we may part with, that we may give the more unto Him ; looking in detail into our expenses, in order warily to cut off superfluities ; seeking how our habits may become more simple ; parting with luxuries which perish in the using, and which soon must part with us, in order to win the love of God ; parting with what you now call comforts, to win the only assured comfort, peace with God and joy in the Holy Ghost, the earnest of acceptance and of everlasting rewards,—parting with earth to win heaven ; with things temporal for things eternal, with fading enjoyments for everlasting glory ; with things without you, that Christ (as He has promised to those who love) may make His abode *in* you.

Would that God may so stir the hearts of this ancient, and, as I trust, yet understanding city, (though it too has partaken of the slumber which in the last century came over all Christendom,)

that it too (as others^e have in part done) would consider what is needed to Christianize its inhabitants, count the cost and set itself earnestly to the task, to recover its ancient glory and the favour of God. But meantime, and to prepare for this, sacrifices must be made by individuals; others will catch the flame of charity, but it must be kindled first by the self-denying acts of individuals; think not then of those who do otherwise, as though to wish to be of them; think it not a hard thing, as if all the burthen fell upon a few, and others were exempt: they are exempting themselves not from a burthen, if they saw things truly, but from a blessing; they are denying themselves the reward, which is in store for such as "sow bountifully;" they are exempting themselves from the labour of the seed-time, in order to reap a niggard harvest, where the harvest is joy and peace with God, their Redeemer's love, their Redeemer's praise, the joy of their Lord, eternal, unchanging, never-palling joy, because the joy of the blessed is no changing thing, but God the Unchangeable is Himself their portion and their joy for ever.

With such hopes, self-denial, self-sacrifice, though hard and irksome in itself, will become itself a joy;

^e e. g. the Ten-Churches-fund in Birmingham and Bethnal-Green; in both cases, however, had the population been regarded, rather than what was hoped from our degree of Christian charity, they should have been twenty, in Birmingham (as it now is) probably thirty Churches.

for what joy, even in this life, is there, like the hope that, "loving much," our "sins which are many" shall be "forgiven"^f for ever; that for the sake of the One Meritorious All-atoning Sacrifice, our petty worthless sacrifices will be accepted there? what joy like the hope that we, though all unworthy, are yet true disciples of our Crucified, Redeeming Lord? that we are being here, in whatever degree, likened to Him; that being made by Him partakers of His self-denying love, we are loved by Him; that keeping His "new commandment," we shall be loved by Him with a new love, an ever new, ever renewing, ever unfading love, for ever; that being "like Him in this world," we "shall have boldness" (as is promised) "in the Day of Judgment;" that following His blessed steps, however faintly, unsteadily, unworthily, yet as upheld by His gracious arm, guided by His promised Comforter, we are indeed His servants, and "where I am, there shall My servant be?"

My brethren, who, if he thought seriously on these things, would not see, that amid the changes and chances of this mortal life, this is the only true abiding joy? who, if he had faith to realize them, would not willingly part with all that he might attain it? Who would not see how this joy must sweeten the bitterness, if it were such, of any sacrifices, self-denials, troubles, sorrows, privations? how much more then, when God gives His faithful servants

^f Luke vii. 47.

even in this life instalments and earnest of their future joys, Himself, by the secret balm of His Spirit, soothes the sorrows of those “ who consider His poor,” strengtheneth them when languishing, healeth them in their sickness !

My brethren, if the hope of these joys be such, what must the substance be ? if the thought be so cheering, as it flashes across our dim eyes in this our night of heaviness, where our minds are so dulled by sin, what will it be to behold His unveiled face, shining in love and mercy upon us, for having loved those who were His ; what to find all the poor offerings of our weak love stored up with Him and accepted by Him, Who gave us what we had to give, gave us the heart to give, gave Himself for us, with Whom all things are given us, and to be repaid in His love, whereby He will fill those who love in Him, more and more with His own Divine Essence, which is Love ? If the thought of these things so raise the soul, what must the things themselves be, “ which it hath not entered into the heart of man to conceive, but which God hath prepared for them that love Him ? ”

God of His infinite mercy give us grace to be “merciful” that we may “obtain mercy,” that we may all hear the compassionate, pardoning words, “ Forasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me.”

Note A, page 29.

The following is the comment of S. Cyril of Alexandria on the text, which has been followed in the preceding Sermon, as alone seeming adequately to give the meaning of the words, which, as is the wont of the Fathers, it presses very closely.

“ Rightly saith the divine Paul, ‘ so then if any one is in Christ, he is a new creature; old things have passed away, lo all things are become new.’ For He reneweth and reformeth after a manner to newness of life, and this inaccessible and untrodden by the rest, who love to live after the law and adhere to the commands of Moses. For ‘ the law maketh nothing perfect,’ as is written, but the fullest measure of piety to Godward one may see in the commands of our Saviour. For for this cause Himself also said in this wise, “ For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.” For we compete not with the Jewish manners; nay, unless we exceedingly surpass the righteousness in the law, never, I deem, shall we enter into the kingdom of heaven. And yet we pronounce not the law given by Moses altogether unprofitable or useless; for it brought in to us what was, although not perfectly, good; yea moreover it is found to be a schoolmaster to the instruction of the Evangelic life; and, through dark figures and types, introducing an image of the true godliness, it engraved in a manner on our thoughts the shadow of the instruction which is through Christ. For for this cause Himself also said, ‘ For I say unto you, that every scribe instructed unto the kingdom of heaven is like a rich man, who bringeth forth out of his treasure things new

and old.' For it is in truth spiritual and exceeding riches for a man to be well versed in the words given by Moses, and to have the benefits derivable from them treasured up in his mind, so that he take thereto the beauty of the Evangelic instruction, and thus be doubly adorned, by the knowledge both of the ancient and of the new law. Wherefore our Lord Jesus Christ, shewing that this law is better than the ancient law, and that the saving preaching was as yet in a manner inaccessible to those who have their converse in the law, when about to ascend into heaven, layeth beforehand as a sort of foundation and basis of all good, the law of love,—but love not according to the law but above the law; wherefore He saith, 'A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another.' But one may say, tell me how He called this a new Commandment, Who said by Moses, 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy mind, and thy neighbour as thyself.' For lo, having set before all others and placed first, as is fit, the love of God, He added, as near to it, that to each other, and conjoined with the love to God, that to each other, in that neither would the love of God otherwise be of the right sort, unless that due to our neighbour followed close by; for we are all brethren, one of another. Wherefore John in his fulness of wisdom well knowing this, and teaching others, saith, 'he who loveth his brother, loveth God also.' How then is it a new command through Christ, although thoroughly prescribed in the old law? But observe how it is guarded; see what He added; for He was not content to say, 'A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another;' but shewing the newness of this saying, and that the love He spake of had in it somewhat far better than that ancient love one to another, He added straightway, 'as I have loved you.' In order then clearly to know the force of what He said, we must enquire 'how Christ loved

us?’ For then may we easily take account of the newness and difference of the commandment now given. He then ‘being in the Form of God, thought it nothing to be desired to be equal with God, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as man, He humbled Himself, becoming obedient unto death, and that the death of the Cross.’ Yea also, ‘being rich He became poor,’ as Paul again hath attested to us. Seest thou the newness of the love to us? For the law commands to love a brother *as himself*; but the Lord Jesus Christ loved us *more than* Himself; for neither being in the form and equality of God the Father, would He have come down to our lowliness, nor have endured the so bitter death of the flesh for us, nor the Jewish buffetings and shame and mockery and all besides,—not, by enumerating each severally of what was done to Him, to go on to infinity, but—neither ‘being rich’ would He have ‘become poor,’ unless He had loved us exceedingly above Himself. Thus He bids us also to be minded, preferring nothing whatever to the love of the brethren, neither glory, nor wealth, nay, nor shrinking, if need be, to go even to the death of the body, that we may gain the salvation of our neighbour, which also the blessed disciples of our Saviour did, and they who followed in their steps, accounting the salvation of others better than their own life, and exhausting every labour and coming into the extremest ills, that they might save the souls of those perishing. Whence Paul saith at one time, ‘I die daily;’ at another, ‘Who is weak, and I am not weak? who is offended, and I burn not?’ Our Saviour then enjoined us, as the root of the most perfect piety to God, to cultivate this love above the law, knowing that thus and no otherwise should we be most approved with God, and following out the traces of the beauty of that love, by Him implanted in us, should be ever in the greatest and perfect bliss.”

In like way S. Chrysostom, although not so fully ;

“ How did He call it ‘ a new commandment,’ which was laid down in the Old Testament also? He Himself made it new by the mode ; in that He added, ‘ as I have loved you.’ For I have not repaid you a debt for good deserts, before wrought by you, but I myself began. Thus must ye also benefit those ye love, not owing them any thing,” [i. e. as Christ died for us when sinners, loving us not according to our deserts, but against our deserts, so also must we others, not because they deserve and have merited our love, but forecoming and anticipating any thing on their part, as He towards us.]

Again Isidore Pelus. (lib. iii. Ep. 410.) “ If thou askedst, is it not then said in the Old Testament, ‘ Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself?’ I would say, yea truly did He Himself sanction this also, but afterwards, when Himself was manifested in the flesh, He added somewhat more, saying, ‘ a new commandment I give unto you that ye love one another, as I have loved you.’ For the ‘ loving’ lieth in the Old Testament also, but the ‘ as I have loved you,’ He added, wherefore also He called it ‘ a new commandment.’ ”

The same interpretation, with reference to His dying for us, is given by Theodorus Mops. and Ammonius, (in Corderius’ Catena in S. Joann.) by Theophylact and Euthymius. Maldonat. ad loc. refers also to Theodorus Heracl. and Leontius, but these do not appear in Corderius ad loc. Of the Latins he quotes Rupertus. In modern times this interpretation has been vindicated, at length, by Knapp, in his *scripta varii argumenti*, and followed by Lücke and Tholuck ad loc. It also occurs in Beza ad loc. and though less prominently, among others, in Bp. Horsley, Sermon 12.



